

PIA Committee

From: Michael Victorino
Sent: Monday, June 27, 2016 8:02 AM
To: PIA Committee
Subject: FW: The voters know only what they are told

-----Original Message-----

From: Jim or Belinda [mailto:2jbhome@hawaiiantel.net]
Sent: Friday, June 24, 2016 5:03 PM
To: Michael Victorino <Michael.Victorino@mauicounty.us>
Subject: The voters know only what they are told


Mike

Consider this news story regarding the vote to leave EU in context to the idea that the issue of manager council structure should be decided by the voter. You'll hear this mantra more than once on Monday, but not from me.

<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/alarmed-britons-ask-pollsters-why-didn%e2%80%99t-you-warn-us/ar-AAhAv7Z?li=BBnbcA1&ocid=HPCDHP>

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Alarmed Britons Ask Pollsters: Why Didn't You Warn Us?

 The New York Times

By DAN BILEFSKY
4 days ago



© Robert Perry/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images Ballots were counted in Glasgow on Thursday.

LONDON — Britain's vote to leave the European Union has left no shortage of losers: Prime Minister David Cameron, the pound sterling and the European Union itself. But it also exposed a familiar culprit: the pollsters.

On the eve of the vote, most late polls showed the Remain side edging ahead. Late Thursday, the market research company YouGov put Remain up by 52 percent to 48 percent. As the voting ended on Thursday, Ipsos-Mori, another leading polling company, gave Remain an eight-percentage-point lead over the Leave side.

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Even the leader of the U.K. Independence Party, Nigel Farage, a voracious euroskeptic, told [Sky News](#) ahead of the result that he thought Britain had voted to stay in the bloc. “I think that Remain might just nick it, but there isn’t much in it,” he said.

Instead, Britons — and Europeans — woke up Friday to the shocking news that the country had voted 52 percent to 48 percent to leave the European Union, with more than 17.4 million people voting to leave, and about 16.1 million to remain.



© Danny Lawson/European Pressphoto Agency Ballots on Friday in Manchester, England. On the eve of the vote, many polls showed the Remain side edging ahead or the vote too close to call.

For pollsters, still reeling from the ignominy of last year’s general elections, when the polls failed to foresee the Conservative Party winning an outright majority, the result was seen, fairly or not, as yet another embarrassment, raising questions about the challenge of parsing the will of capricious voters in open revolt against the status quo.

“Now the results have come in and Britain has chosen to leave the European Union, the reputation of British political polling has taken a hit to rival that of the pound,” [The Telegraph](#) wrote.

[Peter Kellner](#), a leading political commentator and a former president of YouGov, called for polling companies to conduct an inquiry into the failure. "I am not sure what has gone wrong," he said.

Mr. Kellner said one hypothesis was that the results may have been distorted by the sharp decline of people willing to participate in telephone polls, combined with online polls that reflected only the views of the people who had volunteered to participate. In the case of the vote for a British exit, or "Brexit," he said the polls appeared to have underestimated the number of Labour supporters outside London, in England and Wales, who backed leaving.

He said that with the coming presidential election in the United States, the vote in Britain was raising an uncomfortable question: "Are the people who can be reached by pollsters like the people the polls can't reach?"

Pollsters could perhaps be forgiven for their stumbles in this case, given the hefty challenge of trying to parse the intentions of voters in a highly unusual referendum. After all, Britons had not voted on their future in Europe in more than four decades, and comparative data was scarce. Moreover, 17 of the 35 surveys [conducted this month](#) showed the Leave side ahead.

[Leighton Vaughan Williams](#), the director of the political forecasting unit at Nottingham Business School, argued that the 11th-hour swing in favor of Leave came down to the powerful and determinedly euroskeptic tabloid news media, which he credited for swinging undecided voters on voting day.

"It was the Sun wot won it," he said, a sardonic reference to an infamous headline in the newspaper The Sun on April 11, 1992, in which the popular and influential tabloid took credit for the Conservative Party's surprise victory in the 1992 general election over Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader. "If Kinnock wins today, will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights?" it had asked.

The Sun and most of Britain's other tabloids led a similarly aggressive campaign against staying in the European Union in the weeks leading up to

the “Brexit” vote, and the emotive appeals to patriotism on the day of the vote proved decisive, Mr. Vaughan Williams said.

The Sun’s [cover](#) on Thursday showed an image of the sun hovering over Earth. “We urge you to vote Leave ... and make today our Independence Day,” the paper extolled its readers. “Your country needs you,” The Daily Express wrote on [its front page](#), emblazoned with the Union Jack. “Vote Leave today.”

In contrast to past referendums on independence in Scotland and Quebec, when the undecided voted with the status quo, Mr. Vaughan Williams said, the undecided voters in Britain were swayed by the ominous warnings on newsstands on voting day.

“The press effect in this referendum cannot be underestimated,” he said. “The Sun and a majority of the other tabloids appealed to patriotism and jingoism and fears about immigration, and knew exactly what buttons to press. With some polls suggesting that 11 percent of people were undecided ahead of the vote, this had a huge impact.”

Fearmongering aside, analysts noted that there had been a divergence between online and telephone polling throughout the campaign, with online polls at times showing the Remain and Leave camps neck and neck and telephone polls showing the Remain side ahead. That should have signaled that at least some polls had a sample-weighting problem.

YouGov noted that [telephone polls](#) may have exaggerated the Remain side’s advantage because when confronted by a person on the other end of the phone, people tended to give an answer, [even if they were undecided](#).

Whatever the reasons for the failure, the consequences were costly for some: The polls led investors to pile into sterling and other instruments they thought would rise in value with a vote to remain, leading to heavy losses when the vote went the other way.

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